


Formatting a Disk


A **disk** is a device on which you can store electronic data. Disks come in a variety of sizes and have varying storage capacities. Your computer's **hard disk**, one of its internal devices, can store large amounts of data. **Floppy disks**, on the other hand, are smaller, inexpensive, and portable. Most floppy disks that you buy today are 3½" (the diameter of the inside, circular part of the disk). Disks are sometimes called **drives**, but this term really refers to the name by which the operating system recognizes the disk (or a portion of the disk). The operating system typically assigns a drive letter to a drive (which you can reassign if you want). For example, on most computers the hard disk is identified by the drive letter "C" and the floppy drive by the drive letter "A." The amount of information a disk can hold is called its **capacity**, usually measured in megabytes (Mb). The most common floppy disk capacity is 1.44 Mb. Newer computers come with other disk drives, such as a **Zip drive**, a kind of disk drive made to handle **Zip disks**. These disks are portable like floppy disks, but they can contain 100 Mb, far more than regular floppy disks.  In this appendix, you will prepare a floppy disk for use.





Windows 2000

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In order for an operating system to be able to store data on a disk, the disk must be formatted. **Formatting** prepares a disk so it can store information. Usually, floppy disks are formatted when you buy them, but if not, you can perform this function yourself using Windows 2000.  To complete the following steps, you need a blank floppy disk or a disk containing data you no longer need. Do not use your Project Disk for this lesson, as all information on the disk will be erased.

Steps 1 2 3 4

Trouble?

This unit assumes that the drive that will contain your floppy disks is drive A. If not, substitute the correct drive any time you are instructed to use the 3½ Floppy (A:) drive.

Trouble?

Windows cannot format a disk if it is write-protected; therefore, you may need to slide the write-protect tab over until it clicks to continue. See Figure AP-3 to locate the write-protect tab on your disk.

QuickTip

Once a disk is formatted, you do not need to format it again. However, some people use the Quick Format option to erase the contents of a disk quickly, rather than having to select the files and then delete them.

1. Start Windows if necessary, then place a 3½" floppy disk in drive A

2. Double-click the **My Computer icon** on the desktop

My Computer opens, as shown in Figure AP-1. This window lists all the drives and printers that you can use on your computer. Because computers have different drives, printers, programs, and other devices installed, your window will probably look different.

3. Right-click the **3½ Floppy (A:) icon**

When you click with the right mouse button, a pop-up menu of commands that apply to the item you right-clicked appears. Because you right-clicked a drive, the Format command is available.

4. Click **Format** on the pop-up menu

The Format dialog box opens, as shown in Figure AP-2. In this dialog box, you specify the capacity of the disk you are formatting, the File system, the Allocation unit size, the kind of formatting you want to do, and if you want, a volume label. You are doing a standard format so you will accept the default settings.

5. Click **Start**, then, when you are warned that formatting will erase all data on the disk, click **OK** to continue

Windows formats your disk. After the formatting is complete, you will probably see a summary about the size of the disk; it's okay if you don't.

6. Click **OK** when the message telling you that the format is complete appears, then click **Close** in the Format dialog box

7. Click the **Close button** in the My Computer window

My Computer closes and you return to the desktop.

FIGURE AP-1: My Computer window

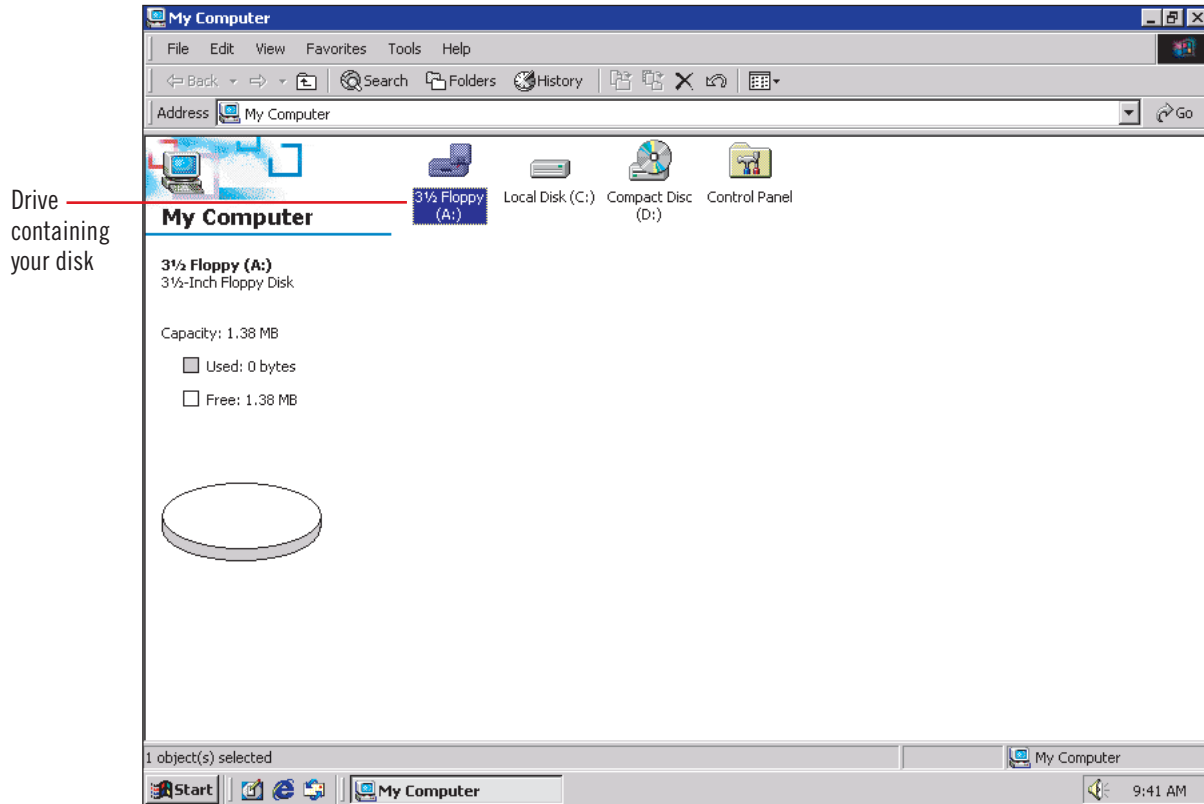


FIGURE AP-2: Format dialog box

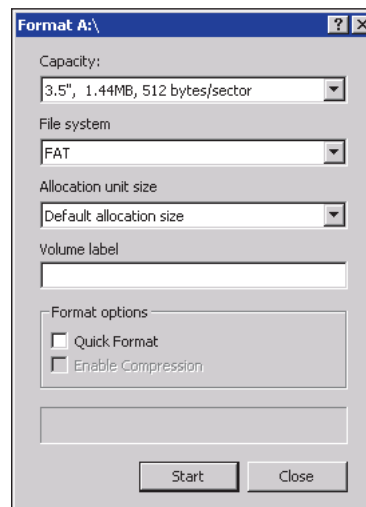


FIGURE P-10: Replicated objects



3.5" disk